DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 031 204 JC 690 232

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Strategies for Improving Remedial English in the Community College.
Pub Date 69
Note-44p.; Seminar paper
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$2.30
Descriptors-*Educational Innovation, Instruction, *Instructional Innovation, *Junior Colleges, *Remedial Instruction, Remedial Programs, Teaching Methods, *Teaching Techniques

Students enrolled in college remedial English courses typically profit little from them. Improved instruction through the use of innovative teaching techniques was viewed as a possible solution to the problem. Following a review of pertinent learning theory, some examples of current innovative ideas and techniques aimed at improving instruction were presented. The topics reviewed included: the proceedings of a workshop that focused on the question of what is meant by mastery in English composition in the community college and resulted in a scoring key to collect empirical data; a rationale for the use of students as teachers; the techniques of using educational games to promote learning; an outline of six requirements to provide for individual rates of learning within the same classroom; the concept of criterion grading where the student competes with a set of objectives rather than other students; an interdisciplinary program, designed to promote interest among low-achieving students that incorporates the use of lectures, illustrated talks, films, slide presentations, panel discussions, small discussion groups, written papers, and laboratory work; and a programmed English course that provides detailed objectives to assist students in learning to write essays and documented research papers. (MB)

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ED 021204

STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING REMEDIAL ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

For

Dr. B. Lamar Johnson

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of Education 261D

JC 690 232

By

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Winter Quarter 1969

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

JUN 12 1969

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

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STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING REMEDIAL ENGLISH IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

It is not surprising to report that English instruction in the community college desperately calls for innovative strategies. The need for more adequate approaches to English instruction is especially crucial for those students who are placed in remedial classes. A state report of 1965 shows that nearly 70 percent (190,000) of entering freshmen in California's public junior colleges failed the qualifying examination for English IA, the standard transfer course.[1] The failure of large numbers of students to qualify for the standard transfer English course is a national problem, for there are more remedial courses offered in English than in any other single area of study. Unfortunately, a majority of students who enroll in these remedial courses fail them, and many then drop out of college. Bossone reports that from 40 to 60 percent of those students enrolled in remedial English classes in California public junior colleges earned a grade of D or F, and that only 20 percent of these students later enrolled in college credit courses.[2] Nor is it surprising to read Roueche's concluding comment after his study of remedial programs in the junior college:

> Traditional approaches simply are not doing an effective job of educating the low-achieving student.[3]

Of course the reasons for the failure of students and the failure of present programs are numerous and complex, and some are probably unknown. However, if the community college is to remain committed to the open-door policy of admissions, the

causes for failure must be discovered. Roueche reminds us that the open-door policy "will be valid only if students are able to succeed in achieving their goals at the community college."[4]

What is encouraging is that many educators have suggested promising ways of improving instruction for the low-achieving students.

II. Review of Learning Theory:

Benjamin Bloom's "Learning for Mastery" provides a provocative approach to learning,[5] and a brief comment on his major ideas is appropriate here, with emphasis on the following:

Most students can master what we have to teach them.[6] Bloom argues that the traditional mis-use of the concept of the normal curve has led educators to produce normal curve results to the disadvantage of most of our students. Observing that on standardized achievement tests, the grade norms which are achieved by top students are later achieved by the majority of students at another grade level, Bloom suggests that we have misunderstood the nature of achievement. Similarly, Carroll posits the view that aptitude is a function of time.[7] Therefore, to re-state Bloom's first idea, we might say that given enough time, most students can master what we have to teach them.

Obviously, time is a fixed quantity in most school situations, even if ability to achieve is not. However, in Carroll and Bloom's view, the task of the educator becomes finding ways of presenting knowledge so that the learner will persevere until mastery; in other words, the learner will take the time (or make the time) necessary to master the learning task. Motivation is

clearly an important factor here, but recent learning theory also has much to offer us. Conclusions of these findings will be made later in this paper, but now to continue with Bloom:

Our Basic task is to determine what we mean by mastery of a subject.[8] To point out that many English teachers can't agree on how to grade a composition, or on the merits of traditional grammer in teaching writing, should be sufficient to indicate that this basic task has not been achieved. Part III of this paper reports on one attempt to decide what mastery means in grading English compositions.

Individual students require very different types of instruction.[9] Much has been written about the need for and the values of individualized instruction, but very little of real value seems to have been mass produced for the use of English teachers. Perhaps mass production and individualized instruction are incompatible concepts. Nevertheless, the concept seems valid as one worth striving for, even if each English teacher must develop his own learning materials for each of his students.

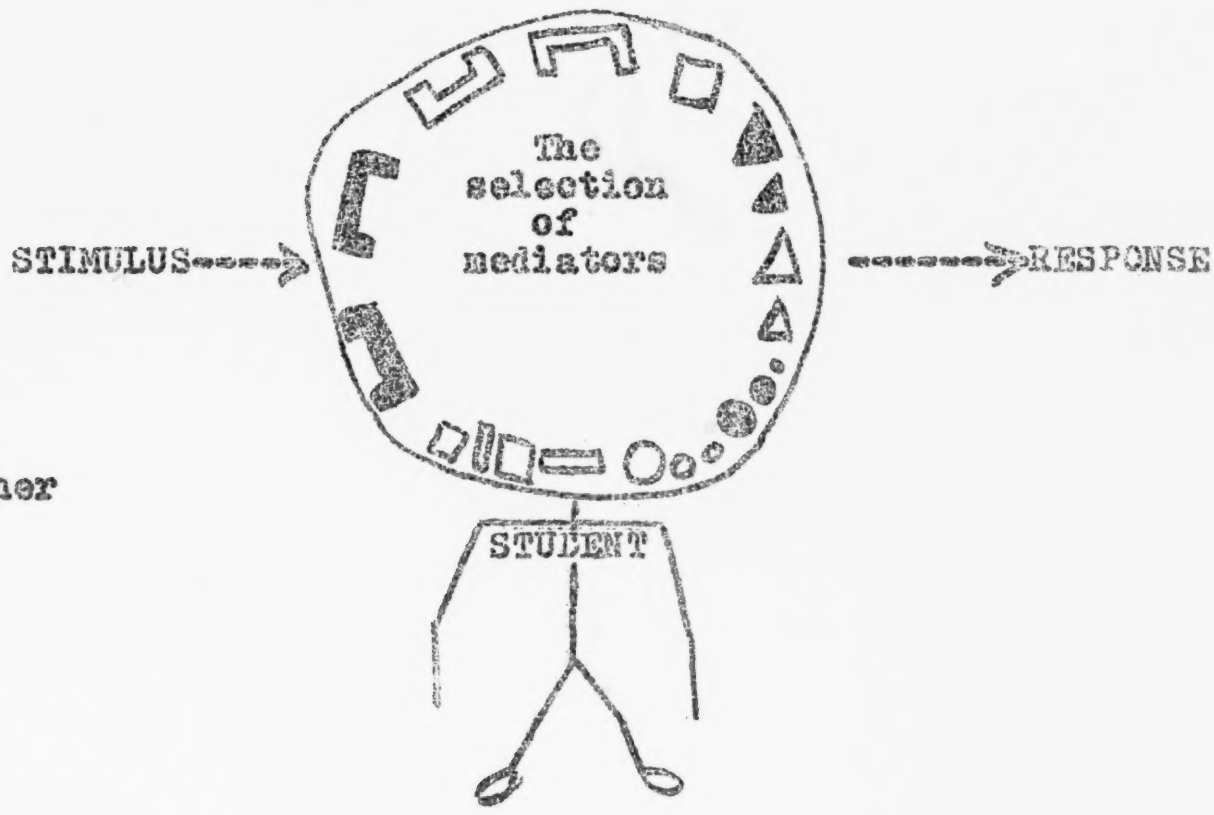
School learning must be successful as a basis for continued learning.[10] If we teach the majority of our students that they are "C" or less pupils, it is not surprising that they show little enthusiasm for school bond issues or for inculcating positive attitudes about education in their children. Given the rapidly changing nature of our world, little is certain -- least of all our 19th Century curriculum. If our children are to be reasonably successful in their lives, they will need to know how to continue lifelong learning to meet future needs which we can

barely discern.

Low-achievers especially need successful learning experiences in the realm of ideas and of self-development.

Much of learning and development may be destroyed by the emphasis on competition; what many students need is help in learning to work together. Grades should be based on performance rather than on an arbitrary set of standards. Furthermore, frequent feedback and specific help with material and instruction are needed to reduce the time and perseverance required of the student.

Robert Gagné offers three additional learning insights which may be helpful in improving English instruction. Future learning is dependent on past learning.[11] This hypothesis serves as a corrective to the optimistic view of learning voiced by Bloom. Viewed most cynically, Gagné suggests there is little hope for low-achieving students to catch up. More positively, this statement reminds us that if we are to help low-achieving students, we must focus on building the mediators which allow learning to be successful. In Gagné's view, learning takes place, for the most part, between the stimulus and the response to the stimulus. He calls this middle event the mediation stage, where the stimulus is coded and a response is selected which is based on the past experiences of the learner. In other words, the learner who has previously acquired the greater number of potential mediators will be able to learn more rapidly. The following diagram illustrates the mediation stage, which will be elaborated later in this paper:



We can see from the diagram that the mediation stage where learning takes place is an internal, neural process which must be generated by the learner himself. Hence learning is an individual and highly idiosyncratic event depending largely on the learner's past experiences.[13] We may tend to over-emphasize or mis-emphasize the role of the teacher in student learning. Gagné reminds us that learning is not fundamentally caused by environment or by the teacher, but is generated by the learner. This is not to suggest that we should ignore the conditions of the learning environment, such as teachers, students, and room temperature, but it does suggest where our emphasis should be focused.

Closely related to these concepts is the hypothesis that learning is best promoted by "guidance" in discovery.[14] In Gagné's view, most learning is simply the discovery of appropriate mediators. (Gagné certainly would not view "discovery learning" as a separate type of learning.) It is here that the teacher serves a real purpose by guiding the student to the answer, but the student must make his own discoveries if he is truly to learn.

Let us look briefly at the ideas of one more educator before moving to applications of these learning insights to remedial English. Hilgard's work may be familiar, but it is worth summarizing:[15] <u>The learner should be active rather than passive</u>. Frequency of repetition is important for learning, as is practice in varied contexts. <u>Positive reinforcement is preferable to negative reinforcement</u>. Cognitive feedback can assist learning, but since students have differing needs for feedback, highly anxious learners do better if they are not reminded of how they are doing,

while less anxious learners do better if they are interrupted with comments on their work. In addition, the direction of instruction should be from simplified wholes to more complex wholes, not from meaningless parts to meaningful wholes. It is important to note that goal-setting by the learner is as important as motivation to learning, and his successes and failures are determiners of how he sets his future goals. The learner's abilities also are important, and provisions have to be made for both slow and fast learners. Some abilities are a matter of physiological and social development, and a knowledge of the individual's development should be related to the demands made on the learner. Personality is a social product, Hilgard believes, and thus it is important to be aware of both culture and subculture, since they are relevant to what and how the learner can learn. Finally, the group atmosphere of learning (Competition versus cooperation, authoritarianism vs. democracy, individual isolation vs. group identification) will affect satisfaction in learning, as well as the products of learning.

III. Strategies for Improving English Instruction

A. An English Workshop : What is mastery in English composition? As has been previously suggested, the success of Bloom's theory, "Most students can master what we have to teach them," hinges on the skill with which teachers can define subject mastery, and on their ability to convey to their students what this mastery entails. In the past, English teachers have been notoriously unable to agree on such problems as the merits of traditional grammar vs. linguistics in the teaching of composition, or even on what score a single theme deserves.

Thanks to a UCLA workshop sponsored by the League for Innovation in the Community College, English teachers may soon be reaching agreement on the grading of compositions.[16] At least the League workshop has produced a promising strategy for improving English instruction.[17]

During two weeks in July, 1969, this workshop focused on the question of what is meant by mastery in English composition in the community college. At the end of the workshop, twenty English teachers, representing 18 colleges from California to Florida, had learned how to specify their objectives in English composition in a measurable manner. In addition to this accomplishment, the group produced a scoring key to be used during the fall semester as part of a cooperative venture designed to seek impirical data regarding such questions as these: Is there any relationship between a student's ability to write and his grade point average? To what extent do English placement procedures actually relate to writing ability? To what extent is writing ability related to scores made on entrance examinations or intelligence tests? Do students who score low in any one area tend to score low in every area (content, organization, mechanics)?

Other questions included: In what ways do students enrolled in "remedial" courses write differently from those enrolled in "regular" college classes? In what ways does writing compare between the same level classes in the same school? How much does student composition improve from the beginning to the end of a course as indicated by two compositions? Do remedial courses remedy certain types of writing deficiencies? Can

change in student writing be traced to different instructional procedures employed in one or another course sections?[18]

In "Is Anyone Learning to Write?" just published by Dr. Arthur M. Cohen, the workshop director outlines the steps of the research project which made use of the scoring key to which reference was made earlier. The entire project follows a simple design which can be readily utilized by any English faculty interested in improving instruction.

The design of this research project turns on two essentials: a self-developed scoring key and a philosophical bias. The scoring key is the most important element in this design. It should be constructed by the teachers involved so that a high degree of consensus can be obtained as to what the items on the scoring key refer, for it is doubtful that any teacher will be really happy with someone else's mail-order scoring key. During the workshop, the twenty English teachers built their own scoring key of nineteen items, which can be appraised on a "yes" or "no" basis. (An example appears on page 11.) Achieving consensus on the items to be included in the scoring key and on what the items represented was not an easy task, but by the end of the workshop, the teachers were able to use the scoring key to grade themes with a high degree of reliability.

The philosophical bias which determines the procedure of this design concerns the nature of learning. If one accepts the theory that "learning is changed capability," the necessity for pre- and post-testing becomes apparent.[19] For this purpose, the workshop participants selected a pair of similar topics to be given to random groups. In this way, a measure of changed writing ability

could be obtained.

Unfortunately, I cannot report on the complete results since the research project has not yet been completed.[20] However, preliminary results are promising. A reliability check was run to see if the workshop participants still agreed on the meaning and use of their scoring key after several months had elapsed, and the check showed high reliability on the nineteen-item key.

The very fact that twenty English teachers could agree on what constitutes mastery in an English composition illustrates the great value of workshops such as this one at UCLA. The use of similar workshops is a promising in-service activity designed to improve instruction in the community college.

SCORE SHEET

	Yes	No		
Content I.	___	___	1.	Ideas themselves are insightful.
	___	___	2.	Ideas are creative or original.
	___	___	3.	Ideas are rational or logical.
	___	___	4.	Ideas are expressed with clarity.
Organization II.	___	___	5.	There is a thesis.
	___	___	6.	Order of thesis is followed throughout the essay.
	___	___	7.	Thesis is adequately developed.
	___	___	8.	Each paragraph is relevant to thesis.
	___	___	9.	Each paragraph has a controlling idea.
	___	___	10.	Each paragraph has relevant details.
	___	___	11.	Details are well ordered.
Mechanics III.	___	___	12.	There are many misspellings.
	___	___	13.	There are serious punctuation errors.
	___	___	14.	Punctuation errors are excessive.
	___	___	15.	There are errors in use of verbs.
	___	___	16.	There are errors in the use of pronouns.
	___	___	17.	There are errors in use of modifiers.
	___	___	18.	There are distracting usage errors.
	___	___	19.	The sentences are awkward.

NOTE: This scoring key is for illustrative purposes only. It is imperative that each group of instructors develop their own key with their own categories.

B. Students as Teachers: Alternative Paths to Knowledge

Bloom hypothesizes that "Individual students require very different types of instruction."[21] Ideally, the instructor should have available for each learning task alternative ways of assisting the student in learning that task. Some students might well prefer to study the appropriate chapter in the textbook and take a mastery test: other students, who find the textbook abstract, might prefer to learn by watching a film clip which presents the essential data visually. Other students might learn best by working with different textbooks. Obviously this concept is not new, for many educators readily accept the values of individualized instruction. The problem seems to lie in implementing such instruction, for it is both time-consuming and difficult to discover and to create materials which can assist a variety of students to learn. What is needed, it seems to me, is a strategy which allows us to discover what materials are appropriate to the differing needs of our students.

Along these lines, further attention needs to be paid to Gagné's theory that the familiar stimulus-response model of learning fails to emphasize where learning takes place, as well as who accomplishes learning.[22] Among other things, the stimulus-response model suggests that learning is only a finger-snap between stimulus and response. While the decision-making process may be rapid, we must not overlook the particular characteristics of this mediation or selection process. Gagné suggests that even memorizing a single item "appears to be an event that is greatly influenced by processes internal to the

learner." Gagné's observations on the internal nature of the mediational process should remind us that the teacher has relatively little control over the learning event.

Thus it should be apparent that to Gagné learning is a process in which the individual discovers solutions to learning problems. In this sense, all learning is fundamentally discovery learning.

Based on his two hypotheses, the following conditions would seem to be important to learning:

1. The teacher cannot do the student's learning for him; this is an obvious truth, but one which many lecturers often overlook. As Gagné expresses it: "The student needs to learn, as a general principle, that learning takes place inside his head, as a result of his own 'thinking' activity."

2. The teacher can guide learning by providing helpful materials for the mediational process. "Outlines, indexes, reference lists, and other materials or devices need to be designed for maximum ease and efficiency of employment by the student in finding the stimuli (learning materials) he needs."

3. The teacher can best guide the student in his learning by telling him where he is going. "Every state of learning should begin with a statement that makes the objectives of learning clear to the learner. Such a statement probably also needs to remain readily available to the learner throughout a 'lesson' or other unit to be learned." [24]

Now to return to the two questions raised by our discussion of the necessity for alternative paths to knowledge; What goes on, or what is the language of the individual student's mediational process? What materials of instruction can best assist individual students in their mediation? Obviously, the teacher cannot discover answers to these key questions simply by observing his students, for the process is internal, neural, and idiosyncratic. It is quite possible that no teacher of a particular social class and background can completely imagine what the mediation process is like for a student from a different social class and different life experience. Still, the teacher needs to know if he is going to be able to assist the student to learn. Why not ask the student? Better yet, perhaps, is Stuart Johnson's strategy for learning.

Stuart Johnson's recent topical paper, "Students As Teachers," presents "a simple rationale to guide teachers in designing learning activities so as to deliberately capitalize on the effects upon students who do the teaching."[25] A key idea in this rationale is that we must examine a student's verbalization if we wish to become effective teachers. Johnson cites D. R. Cressey on this important point:

> In looking for the determinants of student behavior we must look at his verbalizations. His verbalisms represent a symbolic codification of the norms, values, attitudes, rationalizations, social organization within which he exists.[26]

As teachers we can hope to find clues to the language of a particular student's mediational process by listening to what he has to say about it. It would seem to follow that the best listeners will be students with similar backgrounds, for only they will already possess the same or nearly identical mediational language.

A second and related important concept is that an effective way to modify student behavior is to have students teach one another. This concept is reinforced by the findings of Cressey, who reports that

> The most effective mechanism for producing change will be found in groups organized so that anti-school students are induced to join with pro-school students for the purpose of exchanging anti-school students. When anti-school student A joins with some pro-school students to change anti-school student B, we can predict the greatest change in Student A, not Student B. [27]

The implications of what Johnson and Cressey are saying can easily be employed in the teaching of remedial English in the community college. In fact, in his paper Johnson offers three models which suggest a method of operation; one of these models is for a course in English Composition.[28]

Since there is sufficient evidence to question the utility of traditional grammar in a remedial English program, it does not seem unreasonable that one strategy for improving composition ability of remedial students might well begin with students talking to students, and then proceed to students writing about what students need to write about. The writing needs of low-achieving students may well be unknown to most teachers, who are typically ill-trained to teach writing skills.

Why not give students a chance to be teachers?

C. The Values of Educational Games

Clark C. Abt reports on the many uses of educational games to promote learning,[29] including a variation of Johnson's approach which has been developed at the Boston South End Community Center. The game "Make and Take" involves disadvantaged high school students who change roles with their teachers in making and giving tests. Such a procedure has obvious advantages by providing crucial feedback to the teacher of low-achieving students. There is much in recent learning theory to support the use of educational games such as "Make and Take," for games employ nearly all of the insights summarized earlier in this report. In particular, educational games seem very appropriate as a strategy for working with low-achieving students at any level. Such games are superior to conventional approaches to learning, suggests Abt, in at least the following areas: motivation, intellectual initiative, structural understanding of fundamental relationships and organizing concepts, creativity and intuition, and negotiating skills.[30]

Some games deserve more serious attention than they have received for a very important reason, claims James Coleman, who sees fundamental differences between game-learning and conventional school learning:

> When children fail to 'learn their lessons,' it is often said that they are not 'motivated to learn,' and consequently cannot be taught. The task is regarded as one of 'teaching' children after they have already been motivated.[31]

with views contrasting sharply from this model of traditional school learning, Coleman and other psychologists consider the most essential step as "learning to be motivated."[32] Educational games are valuable, Coleman argues, for

> playing a game with a given content has precisely the effect of "learning to be motivated" toward assimilating that content. The game provides the goal for which the content is relevant.[33]

Thus, games fulfill that step which is missing in conventional school practice: They promote learning that "leads a child to actively assimilate the information transmitted to him in school."[34]

In this view, game learning is logically prior to the kind of learning that takes place in the conventional information-transmission model. Furthermore, this view implies that game-learning will have the greatest impact upon those students we call unmotivated, since it is they who have never learned "a goal to which school is relevant."[35]

While Coleman and Abt share enthusiasm for the values of game-learning, Coleman also sees games as something fundamentally different from "a new teaching device." He succintly presents his view:

> I am rather suggesting that the use of games in learning introduces fundamental changes in the nature of the task the school is carrying out: that the use of games constitutes a fundamental change in the process by which learning takes place.[36]

Abt's report sums up the value of educational games and emphasizes this additional point: Games also serve to develop the social skills which may be necessary to unlock the learning abilities of many students. Like other writers, he is aware that the powerful effects of the group upon the individual have been well established.[37] Fortunately, games can capitalize upon this group pressure to perform well. In addition, games can be played at any rate of speed, and offer a variety of roles which can accommodate students of different abilities, thus permitting slower and more rapid learners to learn together. Furthermore, educational games are sound in that they utilize the student's way of viewing things: games motivate the student to make use of the mediators that he alone has, as well as providing the opportunity for him to develop new learning abilities.

D. Providing for Individual Rates of Learning

Hilgard and others have suggested that instructional provisions must be made for the slower and more rapid learners within the same class. Along these lines, Robert Glaser reports on a strategy already in progress at the elementary level to allow for differing rates of learning. As a result of Glaser's work on the "Oakleaf Project," six requirements for individually prescribed instruction have been identified:

1. Conventional boundaries of grade levels and of time must be redesigned to allow each student to advance at his rate of speed.

2. Well-defined sequences of progressive, behaviorally defined objectives in various subject areas must be established to guide the student's progress.

3. A student's progress must be monitored by adequate methods which will indicate needed changes in the teaching program.

4. Students must be taught and provided with appropriate instructional materials so that they acquire increasing competence in self-directed learning.

5. The school personnel need professional training so that they can effectively evaluate and guide individual student performance to best organize instruction for individualized learning.

6. The individualization of instruction requires that the teacher attend to and utilize detailed information about each student in order to design appropriate instructional programs.[38]

To construct a remedial English program along these lines will obviously require much work, but it would seem to be work that must be done.

In the field of mathematics, the "Oakleaf Project" has produced a curriculum from kindergarten through sixth grade, with 480 specific instructional objectives grouped into 88 units. A portion of this curriculum is illustrated on page 20.

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED MATHEMATICS CURRICULUM UNITS

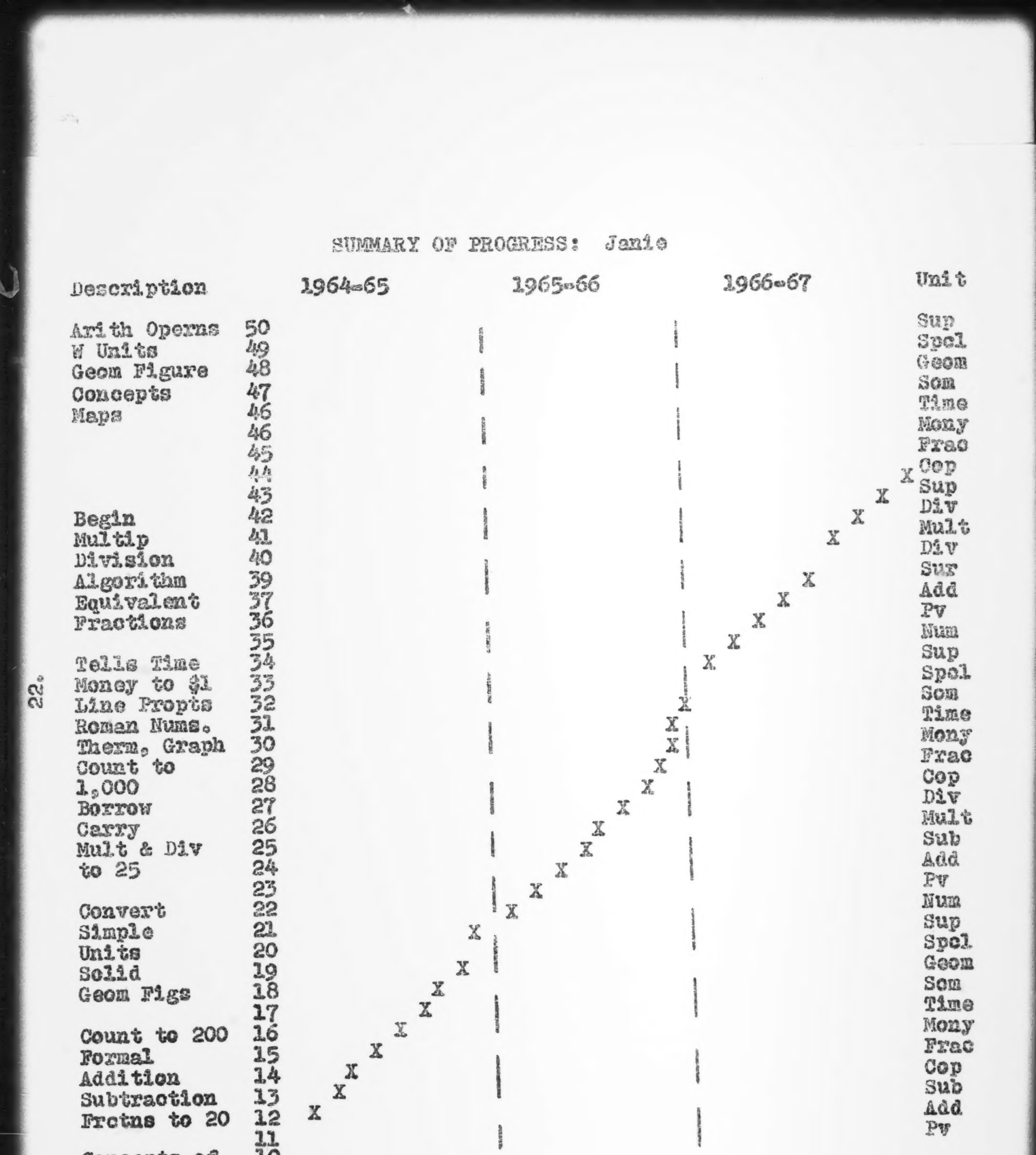
Unit No.	Unit Label	Short Description	Approximate Grade Level
1	Numeration	Counting to ten	
2	Addition	Addition to sums of six	
3	Fractions	Ident. of 1/2 of sets	1
4	Numeration	Counting to 100	
5	Addition	Addition to sums of 12	
.			
.			
111	Numeration	Counting and skip counting to 200	
12	Place Value	Recognizes place values and concepts of "greater than; less than"	
13	Addition	Two-digit sums without carrying	2
14	Subtraction	Two-digit differences without borrowing	
.			
.			
26	Subtraction	Begins subtraction with borrowing	
27	Multiplication	Begins multiplication as repeated addition with factors to 5	3-4
.			
.			
39	Addition	Addition with carrying to 4 digits	4-5
40	Subtraction	Subtraction with borrowing to three digits	
.			
.			
53	Addition	Adds large sums to seven digits	5-6
54	Subtraction	Subtracts to seven digits	
.			
.			
67	Addition	Adds positive and negative numbers	
68	Subtraction	Subtracts positive and negative numbers	6
.			
.			
83	Division	Divides decimal numbers, positive and negative; calculates square roots	7
.			
.			
88			

An entering student is tested on one or more wide-band placement tests which sample the unit objectives. The student then begins work at his level, and proceeds at his rate of ability. A criterion level of 85 percent mastery is required on a post-test or a pre-test to advance to the next level. In this program, testing becomes an integral part of instruction. Glaser reports that the students look forward to their tests, since they are eager to know if they need review or if they can advance to the next unit.

Glaser's report includes several computer-plotted summary charts of student progress over a three-year period for different students at the Oakleaf School. An illustration of one of these summary charts is given on page 22. The X's indicate mastery of a unit in the mathematics curriculum.

Certainly it is possible to construct a similar program in English for students at the junior college level. Such a program would take time and would require a close look at community college student needs in English. Of course, the first task would be to arrive at agreement on the required units in the English curriculum, the specific objectives, and the best sequence. Perhaps the sequence should be individually arranged, but the values of a record of student progress, such as is illustrated on page 22, can be of revolutionary help to the student's succeeding instructors. If the lock-step expectations of both teachers and students can be broken down, is there any reason why some students can not be placed in only those classes which they need? It would seem sensible that students should have the opportunity to skip

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS: Janie



those courses which purport to bring them to levels of mastery which they have already attained.

One more finding related to Glaser's project correlates with several of the ideas already presented in this paper, notably Johnson's and Cressey's on the importance of student verbalizations:

In Hilton Black's study of changes in classroom communications that result from individually prescribed instruction, (as described by Glaser in the "Oakleaf Project") 21 experimental classes in four schools were observed during the school year on six categories of student-teacher communications. In the control classes, the following patterns appeared:

1. Over half of the communications in class were non-instructional.
2. About 90 percent of the communications were teacher-initiated.
3. When the teacher talked to one student, it was usually non-instructive in nature; when the teacher talked to more than one student, the communication was usually instructional.

After the use of individually prescribed instruction, the following changes in communication patterns were noticed:

1. Over three-quarters of the communications were instructional in nature.
2. Twenty percent of the communications were teacher-initiated; of these, three quarters were directed to a single student.
3. About 80 percent of the communications were student-initiated; of these, three-quarters were instructional in nature.
4. There was a trend for the overall number of communications to decrease in the experimental classes.[42]

It would appear that the effects of individually prescribed instruction were making significant changes toward involving the student in responsibility for his own progress. Thus the "Oakleaf Project" points the way to the design of a more effective strategy for teaching and learning in other disciplines and at higher levels.

E. The Strategy of Criterion Reference Testing

The traditional practice of grading students on the basis of test achievement sets up a competitive situation in which each student competes with every other student. In some cases, probably with low-achieving students, this emphasis on academic achievement can be destructive of learning initiative. A more promising approach is criterion grading, where the student is in competition with a set of tasks, not with other students. The release from competition with more capable students frees the slower student to attend to the task before him. If the instructor has delimited the objective of each learning unit, and if he has specified precisely what the student will need to do to achieve that objective, criterion grading can be utilized to the maximum.

Related to the negative aspects of traditional achievement grading is the practice of marking errors on English themes. This practice is negative in effect upon the student, particularly low-achieving students. Even if more than correction symbols are marked in red on the student's theme, the practice of adding comments usually becomes commentary on what is lacking rather than on what is good. The cumulative effects of years of negative

grading can be quite detrimental. Emphasis should be given to marking and commenting upon positive qualities of work. Criterion grading allows more opportunity for positive reinforcement than is generally practiced under other grading approaches, if several specific objectives are set for each learning task. The nearly immediate feedback that is found in programmed texts can be generated through the use of multiple objectives for each learning task.

F. Moorpark's "Man in Society"

An exciting strategy to hook the interests of low-achieving students is now in its fourth semester at Moorpark College. Much of the approach of "Man in Society" (Humanities IA-IB) is indicated by this description taken from the Moorpark prepared syllabus:

> We want to welcome you to the humanities class. We think you'll find this one of the most interesting experiences you've had in school. It is somewhat unusual in that instead of presenting subjects in "boxed packages," a number of issues and themes are presented from various points of view. A full year in this course fulfills the graduation requirements for English, American Institutions and Government, and Fine Arts. As you can see from the syllabus, a great deal of planning has gone into presenting these subjects.
>
> You will find a great deal of flexibility in this course, and, we hope, a lot of room for you to move around and express yourselves. [43]

"Man in Society" meets in large group sessions for lectures, illustrated talks, films, slide presentations, and panel discussions. Following each large group session, the students meet in small groups for discussion of the questions raised in the large groups. A written paper is required of each student once every other week on a topic of interest to him. Each student is also required to keep a "journal."

In addition to the above requirement, each student must complete 51 hours of laboratory work each semester. It is here that each student creates, in a sense, his own learning

experiences: to fulfill his laboratory obligations he may attend plays, lectures, political and social events, and films.

The use of quality films is certainly an effective media which is appropriate to the learning habits of youths. A unit on personal identity makes use of the film "Zorba, the Greek," while one on different cultures uses "The Sky Above, the Mud Below" and "Mondo Pazzo." For the unit on oppression, students may see "The Pawnbroker" and "The Grapes of Wrath." Issues about war are raised in "All Quiet on the Western Front." In addition to the use of films, an effort is made to relate the speeches of distinguished lecturers who are in the area to the topics of "Men in Society."[44]

The student also may observe a non-violent demonstration, support someone who is going into the service by giving him a party, survey citizens as to what Americans should do for Biafra, visit a mental institution, discuss the attitudes of youthful offenders with a probation officer, report on organized crime in his county, list important services from the yellow pages and note those which were formerly performed within the family and are now provided commercially, note the themes of popular music by listening to the radio, make a collage out of advertisements, or write an advertisement for the Humanities program to cite just a few of the suggested laboratory activities in the Moorpark program.

In a unit on our environment and how it affects our lives, the large group session presents differing views of life in the city and in suburbia. Selections from authors such as Hemingway,

Fitzgerald, Cheever, Baldwin, and Updike are given tc the students. In the small group session, a survey on where the students would most like to live is computed and tabulated. The survey results and the readings serve as starting points for discussion. A suggested laboratory activity invites the student to drive to downtown Los Angeles on any workday between the hours of 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. and to record his impressions.

Moorpark College does not offer courses such as Remedial English; instead it uses the interdisciplinary approach outlined above. According to Dr. Richard Moore, Dean of Instruction at Moorpark, this strategy has been very well received by the students. It is Dr. Moore's observation that many remedial programs are really terminal. The truth of this observation is easy to illustrate, for a more traditional approach to remedial English that concentrates on spelling errors and parts of speech, for instance, would effectively convince many low-achieving students to drop out of college. Thus, remedial education of this sort becomes terminal education of questionable value.[45]

Certainly one of the basic problems in helping low-achieving students to learn is one of motivation. The problem is made doubly difficult by the fact that few teachers can completely appreciate the effects on student motivation of twelve years of "D" and "F" work in English. Good advice on this point comes from Ralph Tyler:

> The most difficult problem is setting up learning experiences to try to make interesting a type of activity which has become boring or distasteful to the student. Such an activity

> does not become interesting through sheer repetition. It is necessary to use a new approach in order to shift interest. The new approach may involve using totally different materials or it may involve putting the learning experience in a totally new context which is enjoyable to the student.[46]

Moorpark's "Man in Society" seems to combine both of Tyler's perceptive suggestions.

The value of presenting learning in a new context which is satisfying to the student also follows one of Bloom's insights, which was mentioned earlier. Bloom argues that school learning must be successful for continued learning throughout life. It does not seem farfetched to suggest that the defeat of many school bond issues can be directly related to the unsatisfactory school experiences of the voters. Perhaps more damaging to America's future are the negative attitudes some parents wittingly and unwittingly instill in their children. I would suggest that this is a problem area in which the community college can and should devote more of its energies. Moorpark is attempting to make learning rewarding for those students who probably will not continue their formal educations. By utilizing the community as a learning laboratory and by devising satisfying learning experiences, Moorpark College is helping to develop life-long students who have an active interest in their community.

Page 31 shows an adaptation of the first page from the Humanities IA syllabus to provide one more illustration of the Moorpark strategy for low-achieving students' education. Page 36 of this paper is a checklist which can be used to evaluate

instructional programs in terms of current learning hypotheses. You may wish to apply this checklist to one of your instructional programs. Certainly Moorpark's "Man in Society" would receive high marks on this checklist for its creative attempt to make learning appropriate and interesting to its students.

MAN IN SOCIETY*

(or, Dropping Out of It?)

A CREATIVE CIRCUS
IN SIX UNITS

More Than That: A Continuing Experiment

WITH A CAST OF HUNDREDS

†

Ten Live Instructors

and

Guest Performers

ALL UNDER ONE ROOF=

DEATH-DEFYING
EXCITEMENT
DISMAY
EYE-OPENING

+

ACROBATICS

Replacing Boxed Packages of English, History, Music, Art

To Keep the

REAL WORLD REAL

So much so
Thi that
This year in
This year in this class you should:

Be confused
Visit a ghetto
Read some books
Take part in the elections
See some first-class movies
Think about your own Values and Valuables
Learn to distinguish between technology and science
Turn off and on and off and on and off and on and ...
Plan your future carefully so that you always have time to

*For those who are not interested in Man in Society, but are more mechanically oriented, this book contains many do-it-yourself projects. Our aim is to provide something for everyone.

ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES YOU WILL FIND....

G. Golden West College's "PACE"

Anna-Marie Thames and Thomas Gripp, English instructors at Golden West College, have developed a creative strategy for improving instruction in English IA.[47] PACE, or Programmed Approach to the Composition of Essays, follows the insight of cognitive theorists, who say that if students know precisely what is expected of them, they are more likely to succeed. PACE is a 294 page program, detailing behaviorally stated objectives which will assist the student in understanding and in being able to write essays in various forms, as well as documented research papers which will have practical application in other courses taken during the student's college career. While PACE is not designed for the low-achieving student, the model could well be modified to meet the needs of such students.

One interesting feature of PACE is that it is a combination reader and a program on composition. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the selected essays and short stories are clearly stimulating and well-written. This cannot be said of many readers now available. In addition, PACE uses student essays, which are both written at the appropriate level for understanding and pedagogically useful.

In addition to clear descriptions of the goals and objectives of each unit, PACE includes detailed test items, which are, in effect, theme assignments. Some of the student themes serve as examples of good and poor answers to these theme assignments. A student theme illustrating satire is a particularly effective example of this approach.

Not all of the theme assignments have to do with strictly

"English" topics. For example, one exercise on creativity asks the student to create different captions when given a political cartoon. Another exercise requests the student to revive dead metaphors by utilizing his own experiences. Several contemporary topics are included in PACE, such as student revolt, reading in the age of television, love, conscience and social action, conformity, pop art, and satire.

PACE also serves as a ready handbook for procedures in outlining, note-taking, the use of quotations, and the use of the library at Golden West College.

The values of this strategy are several. By handing the student a carefully prepared and detailed course guide, the teacher is freed from many time-consuming communications. The teacher simply has more time to work with students on those problems which require individual attention. The use of clearly defined objectives which are measurable and the use of frequent tests guide the student in his learning and allow the teacher to assess the relevance of his instruction. PACE is built in sequential steps along a logical pattern which should facilitate the development of composition skill. Above all, this program allows the student to learn at his own pace, within the limitations of time set for a transfer course such as English IA.

Many students and teachers at Golden West College are enthusiastic about PACE. Miss Thames and Mr. Gripp are to be commended for their fine attempt to lessen the void caused by the lack of learning devices appropriate to the student in the community college.

IV. SUMMARY

The problems of effectively instructing low-achieving students in the community college English program are numerous, but the strategies outlined in this paper show promise that much can be accomplished within existing institutions and without a tremendous expenditure of money. The insights of learning theorists are available for all to use. The chief problem limiting the implementation of these insights appears to be the lack of time in which to plan and devise new approaches to instruction.[48]

One also could argue that teacher-preparation institutions are not meeting the needs of future junior college teachers. Indeed, Edmund J. Gleaser, Jr., has written that, "There is no more critical problem before us now than the preparation of competent faculty."[49]

Samuel Rogal, among others, has recently castigated university English departments for their failure to prepare competent teachers of English composition.[50] Others note that textbook publishers are remiss in not providing suitable materials for the junior college student. Few would argue with Basil Peterson's finding that the improvement of instruction is the number one problem in California's junior colleges.[51] Most of us are aware of these failings. Now we need to contemplate the many opportunities that exist for improving instruction. Many exciting and promising strategies have been discussed in this paper; many others surely exist.[52]

It would seem that one of the most valuable moves a junior college administrator could make would be to encourage experimenta-

tion by his faculty members. Faculty attendance at workshops, such as the one sponsored at UCLA by the League for Innovation in the Community College, can provide the time and stimulation needed for creative work by our existing faculty members.[53] The majority of our English teachers are competent but over-worked. Creativity needs time. Let's make it possible for our English teachers to utilize these new strategies in their programs and perhaps to create additional strategies of their own.

V. Learning Theory Checklist

Directions: The use of this checklist can provide a rough evaluation of learning strategies. This checklist will have served a valuable purpose if it simply causes the user to re-examine his instructional procedures in the light of recent learning theory. The value of each item on this checklist is left to the discretion of the user. In general, the higher the total score, the higher the effectiveness of the particular strategy. The user is enjoined to update this checklist as learning theory provides new insights into the problems of instruction.

Operational Qualities of Instructional Programs:

Score Yes	Score No		
___	___	1.	Goals and objectives of each unit are clear to the student
___	___	2.	Goals and objectives of each unit are measurable.
___	___	3.	Provisions are made for immediate feedback when helpful to the student.
___	___	4.	Criterion reference testing is employed.
___	___	5.	Alternative ways of learning each unit are provided:

a. visual approach
b. audio approach
c. educational games
d. students as teachers
e. other alternatives

___	___	6.	The learner is active while he learns.
___	___	7.	Opportunity for repetition of skill in various contexts is provided.
___	___	8.	Positive reinforcement is emphasized.
___	___	9.	Instruction moves from simplified wholes to more complex wholes.
___	___	10.	Provision is made for the learner to set his goals.
___	___	11.	Provision is made for slower and more rapid learners.
___	___	12.	The psychological and social development of the student is related to the task presented.

VI. Footnotes

[1] See Richard M. Bossone, Remedial English Instruction in California Public Junior Colleges: An Analysis and Evaluation of Current Practices (Sacramento: California State Department of Education, 1966), p.2.

[2] Bossone, p.61

[3] John E. Roueche, Salvage, Redirection, or Custody? (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges , 1968), p. 57.

[4] Roueche, p. 15.

[5] Benjamin S. Bloom, "Learning for Mastery" in UCLA Evaluation Comment: Center for the Study of Evaluation of Instructional Programs, I, No. 2 (May, 1968). This paper will be published as a chapter in Bloom, Hastings, Madaus: Formative and Summative Evaluation of Student Learning, McGraw-Hill.

[6] Bloom, p. 1.

[7] Bloom, p. 3.

[8] Bloom, p. 1

[9] Bloom, p. 6.

[10] Bloom, p. 11.

[11] Robert M. Gagne,"Learning Research and Its Implications for Independent Learning," The Theory and Nature of Independent Learning, ed., Gerald T. Gleason (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1966), p. 25.

[12] Gagné, pp. 24-27.

[13] Gagné, p. 26.

[14] Gagné, p. 29.

[15] Ernest R. Hilgard, "Learning Theory and Its Applications," New Teaching Aids (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1960), pp. 22-28. Also see Hilgard's Theories of Learning, New York, 1956.

[16] See the League Newsletter Jottings for more on other community college projects.

[17] The partial results of this workshop have been published in Arthur M. Cohen, Is Anyone Learning to Write? Topical Paper

No. 5 (Los Angeles: Eric Clearinghouse for Junior College Information, February, 1969).

18 Cohen, pp. 8-11

19 Cohen, p. 2.

20 The complete results of this workshop project will be available sometime this spring.

21 Bloom, p. 6.

22 Gagné, pp. 17-21.

23 Gagné, p. 25.

24 Gagné, pp. 31-32.

25 Stuart R. Johnson, Students as Teachers, Topical Paper No. 4 (Los Angeles: ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior College Information, (January, 1969), p. 2. The reader also should see B. Lamar Johnson's forthcoming book Islands of Innovation Expanding on this topic.

26 Johnson, p. 2.

27 Johnson, p. 3.

28 Johnson, pp. 7-8.

29 Clark C. Abt, The Rediscovery of Exploratory Play, Problem-Solving Simulation, and Heuristic Gaming As a More Serious Form of Education (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abt Associates, Inc., 1965).

30 Abt, p. 2.

31 James S. Coleman, "Academic Games and Learning" Proceedings of the 1967 Invitational Conference on Testing Problems (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1967), p. 69.

32 Coleman, p. 69.

33 Coleman, p. 70.

34 Coleman, p. 70.

35 Coleman, p. 71.

36 Coleman, p. 75.

37 Fritz J. Roethlisberger and William J. Dickson, Management and the Worker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

38 Robert Glaser, "Adapting the Elementary School Curriculum to Individual Performance, "Proceedings of the 1967 Invitational Conference on Testing Programs (Princeton, New Jersey: Educational Testing Service, 1967), pp. 5-6.

39 Glaser, pp. 8-9

40 This diagram is adapted from page 18. Further examples can be found in pages 20-32.

41 Glaser, p. 16.

42 Glaser, p. 17.

43 Further information on this program can be obtained by writing to Dr. Richard Moore, Dean of Instruction, Moorpark College, Moorpark, California, 93021.

44 Discussion questions were developed as a result of a recent campus bisit by Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey

45 Richard Worthen, Junior College English: Which Way? (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1967), p. 41.

46 Ralph W. Tyler, Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago, 1950), p. 52.

47 Further information on PACE can be obtained by writing to either Anna-Marie Thames or Thomas Gripp at Golden West College, Huntington Beach, California.

48 Roger Garrison, Junior College Faculty (Washington, D.C.: American Institute of Junior Colleges, 1967), p. 16; also see his view on p. 30.

49 Edmund J. Gleazer Jr., "Preparation of Junior College Instructors," Junior College Journal, 35 (September 1964), p. 4.

50 Samuel J. Rogal, "Train Them First!" Improving College and University Teaching, XVII, No. 1 (Winter, 1969), 44-47

51 Basil H. Peterson, "Critical Problems and Needs of California Junior Colleges (Modesto, California: California Junior College Association, 1965), pp. 52-53.

52

Paul Roman's seminar paper (Ed 261D) of June, 1966, which is on file in the Administration Laboratory, Moore Hall, UCLA, contains an excellent summary of programs for disadvantaged youth in California junior colleges. Dr. Kenneth A. Martyn's Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education for Disadvantaged Students, (Sacramento: Coordinating Council for Higher Education, July, 1966) is also very helpful.

53

See the recommendation to establish summer workshops for the development of new techniques and materials for subfreshman English in English in the Two-Year College, eds., Samuel Weingarten and Frederick P. Kroeger (Champaign, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English, 1965), p. 78, which is based on the statements of 292 teachers and 187 department chairmen in two-year colleges.

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